A CONSTITUTIONAL GUIDE

TO THE

PEOPLE OF ENGLAND,

AT PRESENT

UNREPRESENTED.

WITH

A LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE MR. W. PITT,

ON THE NECESSITY OF HIS MOVING FOR THE REPEAL OF THE SEPTENNIAL BILL, PREVIOUSLY TO HIS PROCEEDING ON THE GREAT QUESTION OF A REFORM IN PARLIAMENT.

AND WITH A DIRECTION TO EACH PARISH OR TOWN, TO TAKE THE SENSE OF THE INHABITANTS, IN THE CONCISEST MANNER, IN REGARD TO A REFORM OF PARLIAMENT, AND ITS DURATION.

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A

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE MR. W. PITT.

SIR,

THE Septennial Bill, like a State Monſter, will devour every propoſition that may be made for a reform in Parliament, while it continues to exiſt. Permit me, therefore, to ſuggeſt to your moſt ſerious reflection, the neceſſity of moving for a repeal of that Bill, previouſly to your moving the Queſtion, which you have apprized the Public of your intention to propoſe. There are ſome members hardy enough to oppoſe a general reform in Parliament, who could not have the leaſt ſhadow of reaſon for oppoſing a motion to repeal an act, which was made contrary to the truſt repoſed in the members who were choſen for three years only. After that time they were no longer repreſentatives; the people might have declared them

them uſurpers, and driven them out of the Houſe. Their not declaring them ſo, did not juſtify the act, or vindicate the tame ſpectators of ſo great an event. When its origin and effects are conſidered, the continuance of the Septennial Bill is an encouragement for corrupt members to look down with contempt on the claims of the people; and to oppoſe in every inſtance their wiſhes to reform the abuſed rights of election. Both the friends and enemies to your intended motion, declare they would have but little reaſon to doubt of the ſucceſs of it, were a repeal of the Septennial Bill firſt moved for and obtained.—With the utmoſt deference to your judgment, I offer you theſe obſervations, confirmed by thoſe of other gentlemen, more experienced than myſelf; being as far from preſumption, on account of my own knowledge, as I am deeply impreſſed with reſpect for your's.

I have the honour to remain,

SIR,

Your obedient humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

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SECTION I.

TO animate you, who are at preſent unrepreſented, I put this queſtion home to the boſom of each of you; Will you be free or not? If you anſwer in the affirmative---peaceably aſſemble in each pariſh, and ſign your names to a requiſition to be admitted into a participation of the right of election, as a recompence for the portion you bear of the taxes; that the fruit of your labour be no longer left to be diſpoſed of by the ignorance or avarice of a few burgage-holders, or others equally incapable to decide on yours or country's welfare. Your enemies aſſert, that you are happy in being excluded from the trouble and importuni-

ties of elections: but, my friends, be no longer deluded by ſuch little and narrow notions of ſaving yourſelves from the diſagreeable circumſtances which are too frequently apparent in the courſe of an election, as it is directed with every ſpecies of temptation to ſeduce, or power to intimidate.---Theſe are the very effects which you may prevent by your joining with the preſent Independent Electors; who, free from every taint of jealouſy, anxiouſly inſiſt on your being put on a level with themſelves. But ſome of you aſſert, that, by your preſent exemption from the trouble of election, your condition is more deſirable than even that of the elector, however courted for his vote, or ſolicited to give it for ſome promiſed promotion of a ſon or relation.---Be not ſeduced by this argument; reflecting, that though exempted from the right or trouble of voting, yet, in the reſult, you muſt anſwer for your portion of taxes, and perhaps a great deal more, to ſuſtain all the bad conſequences produced by the electors who ſell, or members who purchaſe, as the end of that traffic is accumulated taxes on the whole nation: therefore you ſhould ſolemnly add to your requiſition of being added to the electors of England, that forty or fifty rotten boroughs be put on the ſame footing with Shoreham, or that they be totally diſfranchiſed; and, in the room of ſuch, fifty large trading

towns

towns may have the right of ſending members to parliament: and as certain copyholders are clearly intereſted in the landed property, and ſome of them much more ſo than the little freeholders, who are at preſent ſo eaſily to be biaſſed by the nod of people of great eſtates, I am clearly of opinion, that you who poſſeſs copyholds, and farmers who rent a hundred a year, ſhould have the right of voting for county members; and all who pay ſcot and lot ſhould be divided into diſtricts, and added to the electors of each city and borough, as may be moſt convenient in point of ſituation, and agreeable to the magnitude of each.

At the commencement of the American war, a doctrine was ſtarted, to make actual and virtual repreſentation the ſame; at leaſt, it was artfully managed by ſome politicians, to impoſe on America, and enſlave England: but the underſtanding of each country was too well cultivated to receive a fiction for a reality, in the firſt great article of human happineſs; the poſſeſſion of a right, over which there was not the ſmalleſt power to check or controul it, was too glaring an impoſition to convince a planter at Philadelphia, that his honour or proſperity could be ſafe under the virtual repreſentation of a mercenary or enſlaved elector in Cornwall, or any other county, where burgage pro-

perty is actual, and every other circumſtance contrived to make a diſtinction between virtual and actual, that avarice and ambition can poſſibly ſuggeſt to the holder of ſuch little electoral tenements. But ſtill this doctrine of a virtual inſtead of an actual parliament, was urged by the Dean of Briſtol, and others, till it loſt America, and involved England in an intricacy from which the wiſeſt miniſter will not be able to extricate it, though his honeſt management of the finances might alleviate the preſſure of taxes, by diſcontinuing the payment of members, under the various and frivolous pretences by which Lord North commanded certain majorities. Soberly reflecting on the fatal cauſes which have robbed this country of ſo much honour, and deprived it of ſo many valuable lives, let us endeavour to ſave the remainder of the empire, by turning the cauſe of its diſmemberment, into the means of vindicating the rights of election, and thereby preſerving an actual repreſentation and uncounterfeited parliament. As a few muſt ſuffer by reformation of it, oppoſition will be made againſt it, under the diſguiſed maſk of love for the conſtitution, and a reſolution to preſerve it from innovation. To anſwer this argument without any ſubtility of expreſſion, I boldly declare, that were the conſtitution ſo wickedly conſtructed, I would be for an inſtant alteration of it. Before Magna Charta

was demanded by the people, there was actual poſſeſſion of rights by ſome, which the holders would have enjoyed the ſubſtance of, and given the empty name of virtual to the excluded members of the ſame ſtate; but the deluſion could not prevent an ecclairciſſment from being made in Runnymead, and the inheritance of free men was from that moment reſcued from thoſe chains which can never be faſtened on the democratical power of England, but by a falſe repreſentation in parliament. And here I muſt draw out to diſcuſſion the language of the enemies to reformation; they ſay, to add more electors, and extend the rights of election, would be an injury to the preſent poſſeſſors of it, becauſe they have ſold, and abuſed it; becauſe by their wickedneſs, or weakneſs, the whole community is taxed from year to year, they are therefore ſtill to be entruſted with the welfare of the whole, and be enabled not only to injure, but to prevent their fellow-ſubjects from taking the means pointed out for their very ſalvation: an argument of this ſort would not be admitted in the ſmalleſt occurrence of life, and be ſuffered to ſtop the injured from coming at redreſs. The ſame electors who would uſurp the whole power of election, ſtill allow that taxation ſhould be equal. This brings me to take a view of the origin of elective rights: the words of moſt of the charters, and ſituation of preſcriptive

boroughs,

boroughs, indicate ſome old local advantage of internal trade or navigation, to have given birth to the right of electing members; but when the cauſes and effects are totally changed, the reaſon for granting the right ceaſes; it has no longer any foundation in the conſtitution; it becomes an uſurpation, and has not even the decency of an apology to defend it. But totally and for ever to ſilence every murmur that has been hitherto made againſt an extenſion of the right of election---it is a maxim fixed and confirmed by Magna Charta, that a wicked or ignorant father cannot diſpoſe of the freedom of his ſon; and whoever would limit the rights of Engliſhmen, and make them an alienable property, inſtead of an inheritance, to be enjoyed whenever demanded, is an enemy to the conſtitution of England. What would a ſtranger ſay, were he introduced into a large trading town, and informed, that the corporation only, or a few of the moſt indigent inhabitants, had the right of election ſolely inveſted in them; and that the reſt of the ſame place, ſuperior in property, and principally ſupporting the burden of taxes, were looked upon as aliens: this information would inſtantly prove, that injuſtice founded, or connivance continued, ſo great an impoſition in a country reputed to be free. But ſome of the enemies to the conſtitution aſk, what is meant

meant by equal repreſentation? To theſe I anſwer conciſely and irrefutably, that equal, when applied to repreſentation, is of the ſame import, as when it is applied to equal juſtice or equal taxation, conveyed by an impartial hand and general diſtribution amongſt the whole community. But it is demanded, how are the burgage holders, or other proprietors of little thatched villages, (ridiculouſly called boroughs) to be recompenſed for the loſs of their parliamentary property?---I anſwer, it is much better and cheaper for government to pay the value of each borough to be aboliſhed, than ſuffer the proprietors to retain ſo dangerous a power, from which ſo many fatal effects have ariſen.

Mr. Pitt has ſtept forward, and broken through the awful ſuſpenſe with which the people have been filled for ſome time paſt. The queſtion aſſumed, and ſtill to be brought on by him, relative to a more equal repreſentation, is one of the greateſt that can poſſibly exerciſe the judgment of the beſt, the wiſeſt of the nation; but ſubtilty, and all the progeny of corruption, will ſtruggle hard to preſerve their exiſtence. Ambition, and unmerited ſuperiority, poſſeſſed by a few, will certainly diſpute every inch of ground, which they would monopolize, and keep as an inheritance, to pamper the moſt ſordid and baſe

paſſions

paſſions of the heart. Habit will contend againſt privileges, long and fatally huſhed up, and fraudulently taken from the commonalty at large. Uncorrupted patriots have conſtantly perceived the fatal effects of a dangerous monopoly of thoſe privileges; yet they have lamented in ſilence, what their own abilities, unaſſiſted by the general voice of the People, could not encourage them to undertake to remedy; till at laſt, corruption began to browbeat honeſty in every corner of the kingdom: it's dominion was ſeen and felt from the Treaſury down to the loweſt claſs of cottagers reſiding in Cornwall. The ſeptennial jubilee of election became a feſtival of vice, and every diſgrace, to a people who boaſt of the very means which, thus abuſed, render the name of an election a mockery, below the idle and romantic ſcenes which fancy, in its moſt diſordered ſtate, ever ſuggeſted to the diſhonour of human nature. The conſtitution began to totter to the very centre; and all Europe fixed their attention to a ſpectacle moſt awful. At this epoch, public virtue and animated ſtruggles began to employ the pens, and actuate a ſet of gentlemen, who deſerve the honour of being called Patriots, the Saviours of their Country. In the moment when darkneſs, the parent of fear, and general perplexity, began to drive all ranks of people to deſpair, to execrate the late miniſterial means employed,

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and yet to be almoſt afraid to exerciſe their conſtitutional ſtrength to repel them. The Aſſociation of Gentlemen, of ſpirit and perſeverance, ſtood forth, and prevailed over all the magic of thoſe, who, at this pinch of calamity, endeavoured to oppoſe the virtuous ſtruggles of the People, to compleat the downfall of that glorious Conſtitution, Lord Bute had been the firſt in the preſent reign to ſap, and ſhake to the very foundation. When the Electors of Weſtminſter met ſolemnly to debate and purſue the unerring finger of the Conſtitution, ſoldiers were at the Horſe-guards ready to act: this cannot be too often repeated. That praiſe and thanks may be given to the God of the univerſe, for reſcuing a nation, at that moment ſurrounded with danger; that the awful recollection of ſo memorable an eſcape might eſtabliſh your ſecurity, and fix you on a rock of defence againſt a return of the enemy, at preſent ſubdued, but not annihilated; not able to dictate, as was the caſe a few months ago, but ſtill murmuring, like the detected fiend, and like him menacing a formidable oppoſition from the remains of the ſame diabolical ſpirit, which defies the puniſhment it is conſcious is ſtill due to it; and leſt the wicked inſtruments of public miſery and diſgrace be permitted to brave enquiries, and to fling the glove of oppoſition; the fulleſt powers ſhould be communicated from the People to the aſſerters of liberty, to uſe every

conſtitutional means of puniſhing the guilty. This exertion in favour of juſtice is eſſential to cheriſh and once more raiſe the oppreſſed head of Public Virtue.

After a Miniſter and his inſtruments have oppreſſed and inſulted the nation, becauſe from its plunder ſome particular families have been enriched, and conſequently, an union of opinion and attachment of a few againſt the welfare of the whole, have taken place, and cemented together the deſtroyers of the Conſtitution, for the ſake of their connivance and aſſiſtance, ſhall they be ſpared? Mr. Pitt and the friends to juſtice muſt be ſilent, ſhrink back, and give up all attempts to render, by ſeaſonable puniſhment, future violation of truſt impracticable. Much miſchief has been done; ſtate crimes accumulated; and it is eſſential to fix the future permanency of the Conſtitution, that miniſters be deterred, by cenſure and puniſhment, from wounding its honour and proſperity. Why ſhould the Lord Advocate be of opinion that a ſingle individual, for ſuppoſed miſconduct in India, ſhould be followed with every ſpecies of ſeverity, and yet permit ſo many ſtate plunderers, in the heart of the kingdom, to go on in the career of luxury, and laugh at juſtice, trample upon it; and to compleat the deſtruction of it, pretend ſtill to act and co-operate with the friends of the People. After every defiance

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of their power had been re-echoed from one to another of the late Miniſtry, the late Oppoſition Members were reproached with the infamous epithets of being the authors of the ruin of England, and fomenters of the American war: now theſe reproaches are changed into complimentary inſinuations of ſupport, to betray the public ſervants who have been raiſed by the exertions of the people. Thus treachery endeavours to undermine, when corruption can no longer raiſe its batteries againſt the Public; but the People are upon their guard, they ſtand on their oars, and will not quit the veſſel of ſtate, till they fling overboard the dangerous crew, who would take advantage of the firſt doze of the pilot, to ſail away into the moſt convenient port of tyranny.

The late Miniſtry frequently aſſerted, that open enemies were leſs to be dreaded than pretended and falſe friends; the ſame doctrine comes home to Lord North's pretended friendſhip to the preſent Miniſtry. He is ſtill ſuppoſed to have an alliance to power, and is looked up to for that reaſon by numbers, as Mammon is deſcribed by Milton, turning his eyes from Divinity itſelf in Heaven, and fixing them on the golden porches: ſo theſe Gentlemen have the ſame bias in their golden views.

When the Barons by writ were called up to the Houſe of Lords, and ſeparated from the other Lords of Manors, the Commons Houſe was appointed for the great end of protecting and guarding the proſperity of the commonalty, ſelected from them for the ſake of conveniency, but ſtill conſidered as one integral part of the Conſtitution. The ſoul of this legiſlative power is derived from the right of Election; as by birth the peers attain to that hereditary branch of the conſtitution, in which their legiſlative rights are placed, to balance the power of the Commons; but though both are diſtinguiſhed, and have their peculiar rights, yet they are equally ſacred and allied to each other: the fence which guards the one, is a barrier for the other; and the whole is interwoven into a texture the moſt nice and delicate, called the Conſtitution of England. But by the decay of time, the inroads of venality, and the ſubtilty of ſome, aided by the inattention of others, changes have ariſen in the modes of election, and in the genius of the repreſented, exceedingly repugnant to the firſt and original deſign of each, and I may venture to aſſert, ſubverſive of it. This has been ſo plainly ſeen, and ſo fully demonſtrated by effects, that the force of argument is not equal to the conviction ariſing from the plainneſs and ſelf-evidence of the pernicious cauſe. The moment is arrived, when the great end of the firſt and original compact of

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the people, together with the genuine ſpirit of election, and the end propoſed by it, muſt be preſerved; or all future pride and boaſted happineſs of a third branch of the conſtitution be for ever given up, as a phantom juſt to betray thoſe who vainly would repoſe any confidence in ſo treacherous an illuſion of human greatneſs.

The moſt artful ſuggeſtions have been ſtarted to perplex judgment, and render it difficult for the friends of the conſtitution, who have met at the Duke of Richmond's, to agree upon the points to be eſtabliſhed: the enemies to the eſtabliſhment of the conſtitution lay in wait to avail themſelves of every circumſtance, to change ſuch difficulties into diſcordance, and thereby triumph over the wiſhes of the people: but the matter is eaſy, and will be found void of obſtructions, as ſoon as this interogatory be put to the nation---Will you be repreſented fairly and equally, or be again impoſed upon by the fallacious idea of leaving your election-franchiſe to be monopolized by Lord Mountacute's park ſtones, or ſuch cyphers of electors?

By the general conſent of all the people, a Houſe of Repreſentation was formed, to receive the body of the elected, for the good and welfare of the whole; who are ſtill to be conſidered as one community indiviſible in intereſt,

intereſt, though, for the ſake of conveniency, the repreſentatives are ſelected in a room, and inveſted with peculiar rights and privileges, to meet and conſult for the common weal. A Houſe ſo formed and conſtructed cannot, however, keep the privileges of Engliſhmen from the Commons who elected them, and who are co-equal with themſelves. Therefore every male of the age of 21, who pays ſcot and lot, ſhould avail himſelf of the preſent occaſion, and join in requiſition to have his rights again fairly tranſcribed: and as the caſe of Shoreham is ſo recently admitted as a precedent, it is hoped that Mr. Pitt will be ſupported by a general and ſpirited requiſition for a reform---Hitherto the general intereſt has been monopolized by a few electors, who have perverted to the vileſt purpoſes the means of accompliſhing the nobleſt, were they conſecrated to the true and original deſign of election---Honeſty, by ſuch abuſes of it, has given way to villainy, wiſdom to ſubtilty, and public virtue to private emolument. We have ſeen the moſt adulating addreſſes made to electors, who had not the ſhadow of choice in returning a ſet of people whom they have never ſeen. Such elections, the principles by which they have been made, and the end they have been perverted to, are known and expoſed beyond the power of refutation, on the part of thoſe who have long availed themſelves of the monopolized, mangled,

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and long-abuſed rights of election. Let us not talk of reformation in India, and leave the ravage of venality, and power of corruption, ſtill unremedied at home. No honour can be ſubſtantial abroad, whilſt integrity at home is at the foot of ſuch tyrants: no ſecurity for the people can be durably fixed, till a fair repreſentation is again re-eſtabliſhed and acknowledged as the people's barrier.---Therefore let the people, at the ſound of the Trump of Salvation, exert themſelves, and be united: when the people are virtuous, and faithful to themſelves, Providence will not withhold its favour and protection.

SECTION

SECTION II.

BY the honeſt confeſſion of Mr. Fox, it appears that the ſeaſon for making a renewal of our loſt alliance is paſt, and that our future operations of war, however well conducted, can do little againſt ſo vaſt a ſuperiority at ſea, which has been collected againſt us during the baſe and ignominious ſomnolency of the late miniſter. This is a reaſon for the people to be more animated and preſſing to have their domeſtic happineſs, and what is dear to them, in point of the firſt and moſt ſacred laws of nature, eſtabliſhed and confirmed beyond the power or malevolence of future miniſters to reduce them to the fatal precipice from which they may now be ſnatched, even againſt the efforts of the late miniſter. Common prudence and ſelf-preſervation concur to attract the attention of the people, and to keep it from being amuſed and ſuſpended by the ridiculous expectation of conqueſt, which, if obtained, would only add ſo many more gilded dreams to lull your attention, and prevent it from accompliſhing the firſt, and eſſential object of England, EQUAL REPRESENTATION; for, till that is attained, nothing ſolid can be acquired; victory may blaze, but liberty will ſtill languiſh. The people, in radical points of election,

tion, are ſubject to tyranny and every ſpecies of fraud that can be practiſed in India itſelf; where, it is ſaid, for the credit of the nation, a change of principles ſhould be adopted. In this ſituation, the people ſhould continue the ſame manly exertions, by which they have been able to prevail over the late Miniſter. Every idea of repoſe ſhould be laid aſide, till they can aſſert what is ſtill wanting to fix their honour and future comfort on a ſolid and permanent rock, ſufficiently firm to reſiſt future inundations of venality: this rock is an equal repreſentation; every other ſuccedaneum in the room of it, is nothing but a pebble meant to divert, but not to defend. Lord North, in the preſent political canvas, is the marked figure, linked to thoſe horrid notions of governing which the people of England have ſo much reaſon to execrate: whilſt his influence remains, the ſafety and honour of England are capriciouſly ſituated; and every effort ſhould be made, that his lordſhip may no longer, at the moment of public diſtreſs, of which he is the author, be able to inſult over it, with a ludicrous ſtory of the Highgate oath, and pervert the important end of parliament to ſuch purpoſes of buffoonery.

The ſober parent of all our rights was called a Miſtreſs of Popularity. In this expreſſion a

moſt daring contempt for the People is diffuſed: whilſt Pitt and Fox were recalling all the ſacred terms of the Conſtitution to recollection, to impoſe on the attention of the People, and defile the character of the kingdom, the caricatura of a State Miſtreſs was introduced by a member who turned his whole ſkill to torture the moſt excellent features of our Conſtitution; imitating Hogarth, who carried odium on his pencil, and could deform the moſt glorious works of a wiſe Creator, and make his image a mockery and an abomination: whilſt, hot in the Tuſcan grape, and revelling on the ſpoils of his country, Mr. R-----, with the light of his countenance, aſſiſted the Advocate's ingenious ſketch of harlotry, and joined with him to defeat the People of their rights to an equal repreſentation. Still they muſt perſiſt, and never permit an idea of acquieſcence to take place, till their wiſhes are obtained, both to ſhorten the duration of Parliament, and purge the right of election from all the impurity that has mixed with it progreſſively.

It is obſerved in the phyſical world, that wherever there is a poiſonous herb, there is an antidote in its neighbourhood. Thus we ſee in the ſame Houſe where there is an Advocate for ſlavery, there is alſo a Pitt: this is a comfort, and a pleaſing indication of God's goodneſs.

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The People will naturally aſk, How was Mr. Pitt's motion reliſhed; what were the arguments againſt it; and who were the chief oppoſers of that amiable young man's efforts to ſave his country? The anſwer is this---Moſt of the Burgage Members, and all who look up to Parliament for food and raiment, oppoſed it for ſelf-exiſtence, and looked upon the queſtion as a ſtrong and nauſeous emetic. Some younger brothers of the Miniſtry, who had accidentally poſſeſſed popularity enough to get lucrative places, were tender, afraid to ſpeak out in oppoſition to the means which raiſed them; yet too deep to ſuffer the queſtion to be carried againſt their own private intereſt, which militated ſo ſtrongly againſt it.

The pride of being ſeptennial Barons, the vanity of calling all Engliſhmen ſtrangers who are not members, the deſire and habit of keeping all the ſecretaryſhips and places innumerable, ſolely for the benefit of members, in excluſion of all who are not admitted within the walls of Parliament, were the incentives which operated to defeat Mr. Pitt's motion: but not a ſingle member in the majority attempted to aſſert, that the preſent ſyſtem of elections was not full of injuſtice, and replete with every kind of ſtratagem to corrupt, that fancy can ſuggeſt. Their arguments were of a ludicrous nature; and, like Mr. Rigby's, rather

ſportive than meant to convince: they were too well acquainted with the nature of the ſubject, to attempt to leave it to the iſſue of fair reaſoning, and the dictates of the Conſtitution. But the Pay-maſter laid very great ſtreſs upon your not taking ſome meaſures expreſſive of your own grievances in point of election-franchiſes: this furniſhes a ſtrong argument for your future exertions to ſilence ſuch enemies, though that very gentleman, in the preſent Parliament, ſpeaking of a certain Aſiatic General, who was ſent to gaol as a cenſure and puniſhment for being guilty of corruption, pronounced the ſentence to be hard, becauſe, he ſaid, it was notorious how Gentlemen became poſſeſſed of ſeats. No man, after that confeſſion, could have done you leſs hurt; and not a ſingle member in whom the people principally confide on great occaſions, avowedly oppoſed the motion; but, on the contrary, ſome of an inferior claſs, in point of popularity, retreated at the hour of voting, not willing to oppoſe the people's claims, or yet reſolute enough to give up their own proud notions and mercenary opinions; courting popularity, yet aſſerting, that no alteration ſhould be made in the principles of electing members, however corrupt. Sir G. Saville, the old, independent, conſtitutional member, ſupported Mr. Pitt. Upon the whole, conſidering that the preſent Parliament

ment was choſen under Lord North's influence, it is very animating to find a majority of only 20 againſt the motion, which was a preliminary to the great queſtion that ſtill remains undecided, and which reſts with yourſelves to bring to a glorious and happy iſſue. In point of time, the preſent is not only favourable, but the moſt proper and critical to invite you to exert yourſelves under a whig Miniſter, who leaves the people to their own integrity upon this important occaſion. No tyrannic exertions will be made againſt you; but ſtill from your own agency, in your own cauſe, ſucceſs muſt be derived and confirmed. You muſt follow Mr. Vivian's example, and be uncontrouled by the nod of Ariſtocracy: and why ſhould any ſet of Gentlemen ſhrink back at the name of equal repreſentation? Is it to be underſtood that any of them would wiſh to ſell his Burgage property once in ſeven years? No man has yet ſo far forgotten the Engliſh Conſtitution, as to make a declaration ſo ſubverſive of its frame. Will any man dare to ſay, that all is well at preſent, and reſt upon what has been done by Mr. Crewe, and by the Contractors Bill, as an adequate remedy to check and cure the alarming tendency of electing in the midſt of intoxication, and by the moſt palpable prevalence of money over every other conſideration, inſtead of being deputed, that legiſlators ſhould be ſelf-created

to

to govern a realm of liberty? No ſober man will venture to riſk his character on that aſſertion. Whence, then, the alarm to be apprehended, from once more recovering the great fundamental principle of exerciſing wiſdom, inſtead of cunning and inſidious arts; of introducing ſobriety in the plan of wantonneſs, and making a day of Election a ſolemn, ſerious event; and as ſuch conducted, as all affairs of ſimilar import are, with every circumſtance becoming freemen, and rational creatures. Mr. Crewe's Bill, and the Contractors, are unequal to thoſe great ends; they are, I fear, only like a few green leaves ſlung over a quick-ſand, to invite confidence into future danger, and delude the nation into new evils and diſgrace.

The only defence that poſſibly can be conſidered as a bar to future encroachments of venality, and all its terrible retinue, is an equal repreſentation: on ſuch the conſtitution may defy them to return with returning proſperity. A Miniſter is here this day, and gone to-morrow; but the baſis of a ſound Conſtitution will laſt againſt political tempeſts, and moſt other worldly occurrences; may be made ſolid, and, like the Roman buildings, ſtill to be ſeen on claſſic ground, be ſupported from one generation to another, with every mark of ſymmetry, and almoſt immortality itſelf: but the moment

moment is precious, and every Aſſociation in England ſhould hold the lamp of integrity conſtantly burning, and look upon the ſecurity of England ſtill unaccompliſhed, till it is again fixed on the pillars of wiſdom and integrity, and eſtabliſhed in the right of electing members; tenaciouſly reſpecting every fragment, every veſtige of ancient right; at the ſame time ſtripping modern chicanery from the maſk of impoſing on the people, and miſrepreſenting the Conſtitution.

If you aſk where was the majority who had voted for Mr. Crewe's, the Contractors Bill, and the expunging of the Middleſex return in favour of Luttrell? the anſwer is obvious: vanity and ambition, and the love of popularity, will carry ſome members to court it, when they can ſtop ſhort at a particular object; when they can ſay, This is our work, our atchievement; the glory is ours: but the ſame vanity and ambition will turn pale, and ſome of the ſame members will vote on a different ſide of the queſtion, when they find they muſt not cut and carve for themſeves, but muſt co-operate with and acknowledge an equality with their brethren, on the ground of reaſon and natural juſtice. In ſhort, there are men, whoſe ſubtilty will induce them to give a palliative vote now and then, and yet be friends to all the old habits of corruption; but Mr. Pitt's

motion

motion was of a very deciſive nature, totally ſubverſive of all ſuch parliamentary tricks: its ſpirit comprehended truth, juſtice, and wiſdom, the ſound materials of the Engliſh Conſtitution; differing from other expedients, meant only to ſolder it up with vanity in diſguiſe, and concealed ambition, alternately pleading for the Conſtitution, yet meaning nothing more than to eſtabliſh private intereſt.

Gentlemen, the moſt humble of you all may now perceive the delicacy of your ſituation; and remembering the chains with which you were bound under the late Miniſter, endeavour to keep them from being again fixed upon you; and be not too ſecure in the hope of your having flung them off for the moment; like the lion, who, having broken open the door of his den, ſhould fall aſleep at the threſhold, and loſe his liberty for ever.

SECTION

SECTION III.

MR. Pitt's motionto take a review of the rights of Election, muſt be allowed to be not only one of the moſt reaſonable, but eſſential meaſures of Patriotiſm, ſuggeſted to preſerve, and to make this kingdom one of the firſt in the world. Even Mr. Rigby, and others, who pretend to diſavow openly, yet in private, wantonly acknowledge the baneful influence of the monopoly of intereſt, which, in almoſt every part of the kingdom, prevails over the genuine ſenſe of the people; elſe why ſhould there be ſuch joy to ſeat an honeſt candidate, were it not notorious that trick and chicanery fill above one half of the Houſe? ---that debauch, riot, and anarchy, are the offſpring of the Septennial Bill; and therefore whoever wiſhes to ſee theſe inſtruments of corruption annihilated, ſhould ſtruggle againſt the elementary cauſe of it, and inſiſt on a repeal of that act. To exhibit profligacy, to encourage intoxication, and ſuppreſs all the rational faculties of the ſoul, is the groundwork of elections at preſent. In any other ſerious buſineſs, were ſuch means attempted, they would exclude a man from ſociety; therefore Mr. Pitt's ſentiments are conſecrated by thoſe of his father, whoſe loud complaints

made of the narrow and illiberal ſpirit of election of members, even when corruption was not ſo groſs and general as it is at preſent, juſtify the ſon's attempt to contend againſt it with all his abilities. The firſt deſign of the Conſtitution is too perfect to want any reform; yet to revive its latent powers is juſt and neceſſary: and at this moment, when taxes are ſpread over the whole ſurface of the kingdom, preſſing on the ſhoulders of all, the rights of all ſhould be reſtored. In this we ſhall again ſee anarchy turned into harmony; for, as compleatly as the comprehenſive violin in the compaſs of four ſtrings contains the whole force of muſic, and as in the firſt formation of this inſtrument, the whole principle of IT was wiſely concerted; ſo the Engliſh Conſtitution, in the original frame, is as nicely perfect, and wants to be but reſtored, to give univerſal accordance.

Mr. Pitt's motion is far from experimental; it is far from perilous; it is ſafe in every effect, and conſiſtent to the united opinion of every fair and upright man in the kingdom. The independent Electors, to diſcharge the truſt of ſuch, want all the eſſential powers, and call for aſſiſtance from their brethren, who are deprived of the rights of Election: they are as willing to communicate the advantages they poſſeſs, and are too honeſt to ſell, as they are deſirous

deſirous to have an addition of ſtrength, by a freſh acceſſion of Electors to reſtrain the deluded and unfortunate men, who at preſent monopolize, in ſome reſpects, and are yet unable to act, to ſpeak, or exerciſe their judgment, but as the dictates of their few commanders move and direct them.

The People rejoiced to ſee Lord North turned out of the power he had abuſed; but they are not half ſatisfied, whilſt they ſee him head and conduct a majority againſt them. This man they regard as linked to others, who at this moment are full of dark contrivances to oppoſe the people, and ſubvert their deſigns; who hope, out of the ruins of their character, to erect a monument of their own wicked power; and in a few months time, to triumph over the preſent Miniſter, whoſe endeavours to make peace with America and Holland are cramped by difficulties left by Lord North, as his friends and ultimate ſupporters; but this Caledonian gauze is ſeen through by the people, and they ſhould ſeaſonably inſiſt upon enquiries, and fix diſgrace and cenſure on the authors of that variety of miſchief that has been accumulated by treachery and ignorance, and ſeparate the innocent from the guilty.

Lord Shelburne has confeſſed that it is abſolutely neceſſary to reform the preſent ſyſtem,

of repreſentation: his exertions, united to the Duke of Richmond, and others, cannot fail to accompliſh the great and brilliant object, to which England now fixes its whole attention, hoping to derive from it ample conſolation for all the loſſes and diſgrace ſuſtained by the late Miniſter's ignorance and treachery; nor will the plan to reſtore the Conſtitution to the original deſign of Elections, be ſo full of difficulty as ſome people apprehended it to be. The regulations made at Shoreham, and the good effects ariſing from them, exhibit to England a model both ſimple and beneficial, moſt eaſily to be copied and executed in every other part of the kingdom. Thus, like Shoreham, all other boroughs will be ſaved from the poſſibility of falling into the ſnares of corruption, the preſent offſpring of inconſiſtent and partial principles of election. The inſtant they are laid open, and extended on a broad and liberal baſis of freedom and equality, ſo far from having any future villainy practiſed at Elections, not a ſingle conteſt will be ever heard of. The city of London, and others, can chuſe their members according to the fair and honeſt ſuggeſtions of their own hearts. Other places as populous and well-defended with Electors, to a conſiderable amount, trample upon corruption. This is a proof that the purity of election muſt depend

upon

upon the increaſe of Electors; that ſuch confeſſedly appear to be the only means of removing the canker fixed to the heart of the conſtitution.

In regard to the number of members, the preſent are perfectly adapted to the Conſtitution; and I am totally againſt augmenting them; for the augmentation of electors will anſwer all the good purpoſes ſo generally wanted, and ſo anxiouſly implored by every honeſt man. To the freeholders, let the copyholders be added, as I have already ſaid; and let every county be divided into diſtricts, and every male of 21 years, paying ſcot and lot, be regiſtered and claſſed in equal and fair proportions, and added to the electors of each city and borough. As ſoon as this regulation is eſtabliſhed, no trading members will be ſeen, election brokers employed, or ſale of liberty accompliſhed in Aſia; parliament will be a ſervice, and not a traffic, members will be choſen, and not ſelf-created: to canvas ſucceſsfully, men muſt live honeſtly. England, you have reaſon to ſigh for ſo glorious a change!---In juſtice to Mr. Elliot, of Cornwall, though poſſeſſed of ſeveral boroughs, he voted, like an honeſt man, for Mr. Pitt's motion; he and ſuch men deſerve a monument to perpetuate human honour; and they will find one

in

in the hearts of every friend to their country, as long as public virtue ſhall retain its ſanctuary in the world; and Record ſuch patriotic greatneſs of ſoul ſhall cheriſh, and hold up to poſterity, as the nobleſt object of imitation.

SECTION

SECTION IV.

THE preſent evil that lurks at the root of elections is a preference of *property* to *perſons*. A fatal debaſement of the creatures of God follows this pecuniary, this ſordid ſuperiority of wealth, over the great franchiſe unalienable from man, as he is conſtituted by his Maker a free agent. With what reaſon can it be ſaid, that man is born free in England, when he is, by certain reſtrictive ſtatutes, conſidered as not competent to exerciſe the rights of liberty, or enjoy the great privilege of giving his vote as an elector? Let us follow up the conſequences which are allied to this ſordid doctrine of excluding all Engliſhmen from the rights of election, who do not fall within the letter of ſtatutes made apparently at the inſtigation of ambition, or confirmed by the accretions of power. We ſee the nature of elections loſing all its ſimplicity, bartering its virtue for profit, and at laſt, under the old name of Conſtitution, every ſtratagem is uſed to rob it of its faireſt inheritance, liberty.

In Germany, the name of electors is ſtill preſerved; and the emperor muſt be elected king of the Romans, to be qualified for the imperial diadem; but what is the reſult of this

ſham

ſham election?---Why, he always takes care, and has the power to get his ſon or neareſt relation choſen; and what was intended to be a free choice, becomes an idle parade---a compulſion of family power. The King of England, who is qualified to vote as elector of Hanover, is little more than one of T. Pitt's burgage-tenants at Sarum, in the election of this repreſentative, called a King of the Romans. This is the conſequence of family intereſt, and ſuffering property, inſtead of perſons, to direct elections. Let England then convince the world, that ſhe knows, and is reſolved to aſſert the value of free-agency, and hold out to the univerſe, that liberty is more than a name to delude and beget opinions, and create ſentiments it cannot gratify. At preſent a conſtitutional miniſter, apprehenſive of danger from an invaſion, makes a tender of arms to all who chuſe to defend their families and country. Hence there is an inference to be drawn in favour of an equal repreſentation. If the greateſt and moſt exalted are obliged, in times of danger, to ſeek for the arm and ſtrength which nature has given to all men, why not give to each the exerciſe of reaſon, as well as the exerciſe of the brutal part of his abilities? In Turkey, the natural ſtrength of man is equal to what it is in England: Reaſon makes the difference, and Liberty is her only protectreſs. Then, my Countrymen, follow

low the miniſter's own deſire, and report to him reſolutely, that your arms are ready to defend and protect your country from external enemies; but that you will alſo exert yourſelves againſt thoſe ſtill more dangerous, corruption and partial repreſentation, the ignominious ſlave of it. Be firm in both reſpects, and report to the miniſter your opinions fully and clearly. Dr. Jebb, and others, have expoſed the fallacy of ſeveral ſtatutes, which, according to Plowden, are invalid, becauſe they militate againſt the truth. At preſent I quote no ſtatute, but bring to your recollection a memorable ſaying of Lord Chatham---'Not dog-ear'd books, but the heart, muſt de-'cide on the great point of Engliſh liberty.'

If to eſtabliſh and maintain the rights of mankind, if to face danger, to bear calumny, and riſk even menaced impeachment itſelf, for the glory of England, can form the character of patriotiſm---the Duke of Richmond's will be fixed, and ſacredly regarded, as long as the Engliſh ſhall revere the great and animating ſpirit, to which their country may owe its preſervation.

Various cenſures have been acrimoniouſly paſſed on the principles of the Aſſociations of England, to awaken the jealouſy and raiſe the arm of monarchy againſt their intended

 deſign

deſign once more to reſtore the Parliament to a ſyſtem of virtue. But to defend the champions of this great and very valuable deſign, to cruſh their enemies, and expoſe to the ſight of common ſenſe, the ſubſtance of the arguments uſed by them, let us only examine them fairly. They aſſert that the end deſired is unconſtitutional, and were the Aſſociators to be ſucceſsful in their ſtruggles, they would deſtroy monarchy!---What! becauſe the object propoſed by equal repreſentation is to deſtroy corruption? And will theſe gentlemen dare to aſſert, that the monarchy of England is founded in corruption, in fraud, and ſubtilty, and that therefore it cannot ſurvive the re-eſtabliſhment of that impartial, and wiſe principle of the Commons Houſe, upon which the glory of a good King, and happineſs of free and virtuous Subjects, by a moſt ſolemn and reciprocal compact, were firſt united, and rendered inſeparable?

I leave the queſtion to be anſwered by every friend to his country, and by the King himſelf, who ought to be the firſt in that number to determine, whether it be MEANT to inſult or to betray? Whether the Aſſociators, who would reſtore virtue, or their enemies, who would retain corruption, are the beſt friends of the Conſtitution?

To conclude---Let all true Patriots animate their countrymen to avoid the ſnares of prejudice, the danger of indolence, and arts of ſeduction: nor let them deſpair of being victorious in a conteſt in which their public virtue has engaged them to ſupport the honour of their country, and aſſert the glory of Him who ruleth in the higheſt!

JOHN WILLIAMS.

THE Inhabitants of each Town and Pariſh are deſired to prepare a parchment, with four columns; and under each to ſign their names, to expreſs their ſenſe of a reform in Parliament, and the duration moſt agreeable to their collected opinions---

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